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The Life to which we are called :

SEVEN PLAIN PRACTICAL SERMONS,

PREACHED

At S. PAUL'S, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, in 1866-7;

And at LEA MARSTON.

BY

THE REV. J. H. T. TTIETT,

PERPETUAL CURATE OF LEA MARSTON;

Author of "Gems of Thought on the Sunday Services,"



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TO THE
LADY GEORGIANA BATHURST,
WHO TAUGHT ME BY HER EXAMPLE
THAT
IN QUIETNESS AND CONFIDENCE IS THE STRENGTH
OF
"THE LIFE TO WHICH WE ARE CALLED,"
THIS VOLUME
IS
GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

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THESE Sermons are published only at the request of some who heard them at S. Paul's, Knightsbridge, and who have assured me that their publication will be useful to the Church.

My parishioners at Lea Marston will recognise them as having been previously preached to them: only a few sentences here and there have been added to meet the special circumstances of a London congregation.

God's message of Grace is one and the same to all His people; and I think it right to deliver it in the same plain words to every congregation I am called to teach.

I think it right to take this opportunity of stating that the Second Sermon of this Volume was preached at S. Paul's before I had read Mr. Liddell's "Scriptural Rationale of Eucharistic Vestments," or clearly understood his views on the subject of "Ceremonial Development:" so also was another Sermon preached by me on the Feast of S. Simon and S. Jude, which may hereafter be published in another form.

If but one soul be brought nearer to God through the reading of these Sermons, they will not have been published in vain: and to His Name be all the glory.

PARSONAGE, LEA MARSTON,
JULY 25, 1867.

SERMON I.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE TEST OF CONVERSION.

Joel ii. 13. First Morning Lesson.

“TURN UNTO THE LORD YOUR GOD.”

I SHALL frequently have occasion to observe what a striking harmony of doctrine is to be found in the Gospel, the Epistle, the Collect, and the First Lessons appointed for each Sunday throughout the Christian year. To the faithful soul indeed they sound but as one chord of Divine Truth: they set forth one and the same distinctive lesson week by week. For this we first turn to the Gospel; because that contains the Voice of the LORD, the great Head of the Church Himself. We listen for it next in the Epistle; for that is the echo of the LORD's Voice from His inspired Apostles. The Collect is the re-echo of the same from the Church of all ages. Then we seek in the First Lessons an example and illustration of what we are taught in the Gospel. See how true this is with respect to the special services appointed for this day.

I. The Gospel, you will remember, is the Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son. It is recorded how the king sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the feast; and they would not come. "They made light of it." Herein lies the whole warning of the Parable. "They made light of" both the King by whom, and the feast to which, they were invited. They did not consider who it was that had called them: they were evidently wanting both in love and reverence for him as their king. Nor did they consider the dignity and blessedness of the feast prepared for them. They were "unwise," not knowing that their best interests lay in redeeming this opportunity of doing honour to their king; and so, by their foolish inconsideration, they brought wrath and destruction upon themselves and their city. And look at that man who had the wisdom to obey the call of his king, but came without a wedding garment. He, too, was "unwise:" he was not "ready both in body and soul." He would not take the trouble to understand by enquiry what "the will" of the king was; therefore he perished in the very midst of his privileges. Yes; these men—all of them, both those who stayed away and he who came—were doubtless so engrossed in their own selfish cares and pursuits, that they had lost, for the time, all due honour for their master, and all consideration for their own true good.

II. It can hardly be necessary to point out how the Epistle applies this warning to all Christian men: "See, then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." Think what you are, whither you

are going, what you are doing, whom you are serving; "redeeming the time;" that is, buying up, denying yourselves to obtain the opportunity of serving your Divine Master. "Wherefore be ye not unwise,"—thoughtless and careless, making light of your responsibilities and duties and blessings;—"but understanding"—giving your minds to consider, and your hearts to desire—"what the will of the Lord is." Watch for His every call, and fulfil His every command.

III. Nor can you now fail to understand why those words of the Collect are put into our mouth by the Church, "that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things which Thou wouldest have done." For who does not see that this spirit of cheerful obedience to their LORD, this readiness of mind and heart and body, was just what those men in the Gospel lacked; and the opposite to this is just what St. Paul warns all Christian men against?

IV. Now it will not be difficult to show that this same warning against making light of God's call, and being unready in body and soul to accomplish His Will, is conveyed by the First Lesson for this morning. God had sent forth upon His people certain judgments, significant premonitions of the last judgment of all. Terrible things were written upon the face of the earth, whithersoever they turned their eyes. That which the palmer-worm had left had the locust eaten; and that which the locust had left had the canker-worm eaten; and that which the canker-worm had left had the caterpillar

eaten. The harvest was perished: the grains were rotten under their clods: the garners were laid desolate: the barns were broken down; for the corn was withered. Not only was "joy withered away from the sons of men," but also "the beasts groaned;" "the herds of cattle were perplexed," because they had no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep were made desolate. To double this judgment upon them, there came drought. Again the beasts of the field cried unto God; for the rivers of waters were dried up, and the burning heat had devoured the pastures of the wilderness. Following in the train of these, Famine and Pestilence came marching in their silent might through the land, filling many a home with misery and mourning. Meanwhile the hosts of the Gentiles were drawing near, hovering around the very city of God, like eagles watching for their prey.

And what did all this mean? To what one end did these varied judgments point? They were not only outcomings of Divine vengeance; they were not only vindications of the unchangeable laws of His righteous kingdom; they were not only the scourgings of His rebellious family. They were eloquent signs of His Presence: they were pleadings of His love: they were so many voices crying over the land, to every home, to every heart—"Turn unto the LORD your God." They were meant to arouse careless souls—those who were walking "as fools" amongst His people—to think of their true King, to make no longer light of His calls; but to turn their whole life to Him, to be ruled by His word. They were intended to remind faithful souls,—those who

were walking "as wise," those who were ready cheerfully to accomplish His will,—that the LORD God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob had not cast away His people; but was still watching over them with unfailing mercy, and ruling them in truth and righteousness. So it was in the days of Pharaoh. God said, "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power." He would show the proud Egyptian tyrant at once the true power of His long-suffering mercy towards those who hardened their hearts against His kingdom, and His power to bring them down at the last. He would show unto His people His power to preserve them in all their troubles, and to deliver them from all their foes. So it was in the days of Ezekiel. It is not a little remarkable that almost always, after judgments have been threatened, God adds, "Ye shall know that I am the LORD." That most affecting history of His dealings with His people, contained in the 20th chapter, read to us a few Sundays ago, concluded with the words: "And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the LORD God." But, ah! notwithstanding all His wonderful works, and the clear signs which He gave them of His coming to judgment, still the greater number of His professing people walked "as fools." They would not be "understanding what the will of the LORD" was. They recognized indeed His hand: they trembled, like guilty slaves, at what they conceived to be His wrathful voice. They thought, in the worst spirit of

superstition, that He had an unfavourable mind towards them, which they must try by all means to change. Wherefore they impiously thought to bribe Him, by outward observances, to become their friend. They brought their "vain oblations" in richer abundance, and lifted up their fearful prayers more and more, and invoked holy names more frequently. They did everything but that which God required, namely, to turn themselves unto Him, and yield themselves wholly to His kingdom. Therefore He was compelled still to reveal His wrath against them. The great "controversy with His people," of which the First Lesson for this evening speaks, still went on—all in vain. They filled up their measure of iniquity. And then His angels, with their "slaughter weapons," came forth. The Holy Nation was smitten to the dust: the city of God, that "fair place, the joy of the whole earth," was levelled with the ground: the Temple was profaned; and they were scattered abroad over the face of the earth; because they would not be wise, and turn unto the Lord their God.

Oh! Brethren, if ever there was a time when the warning of all this spoke mightily home to the hearts of Englishmen, it is now. We have held a solemn Fast-Day on account of the Cattle Plague. Week after week we have prayed to our God for deliverance from that, and from the Cholera which has already so terribly afflicted some parts of this country. There are rural districts wherein at this very time we might find a true realization of the description of Joel, "The land mourneth, for the corn is wasted The

grains are rotten under their clods. How do the beasts groan ! the herds of cattle are perplexed. the flocks of sheep are made desolate." To apply to our own case the striking language of the Prophet Micah, which we shall hear in the First Lesson for this evening, "The hills" have heard God's "controversy with His people ;" and now "the Lord's Voice crieth unto the city." Would there were satisfactory evidence before us that these judgments of God have done their work ; that they have made many "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil." Would we could see the heart of the nation turning unto the Lord our God in truth and righteousness ! But I fear it has been with us little better than with the Jews in the days of Ezekiel. They came to the Prophet, and "sat before him," as if there were a kind of sanctuary of safety in his presence. They "enquired of the Lord" at his mouth ; as if the very act of listening to the message of God were a charm against the evils he foretold. They were willing enough to put their bodies under the protection of the Power they dreaded ; but their hearts were estranged from Him by their idols. And they took comfort to themselves in the knowledge that there were amongst them holy men—men with the spirit of Noah, Daniel, and Job—who were offering up prayers which they themselves had not faith to offer, and presenting the sacrifice of righteousness which they themselves would not seek after. My brethren, is there not something of this spirit working amongst ourselves at this moment ? Did not some

of you when you heard those collects, praying for deliverance from the cattle plague, and from the cholera, feel grateful for the mere fact that they were offered up; even though you yourselves never entered into the spirit of them, nor resolved, nor desired to fulfil them in your own lives? Do you not feel a certain satisfaction in knowing that there are good and earnest men who recognize God's judgments, and are grieved for the sins of the nation, and cry aloud for Divine Mercy; even though you remain insensible, making no confession of your sins, nor desiring to be more prayerful, nor setting yourselves to learn righteousness? O think! Can this indolent homage to His Word of Truth from souls that will not yield themselves to its sway be anything but dishonorable to the living God? He seeks not *ours* but *us*. He requires of us, not occasional thoughts of good, passing excitements of devotion, periodical observances of outward religion; but the turning round of our whole selves to Him, to be filled with the light of His truth, and to be ruled by the power of His Spirit. He calls us to turn our minds from the degrading tyranny of human opinion, and the vain dreams of earthly philosophy; to turn our imaginations from the corrupting sensualism of a passing world; to turn our desires from the things of death around us. He calls us in every sorrow which overshadows our hearts and homes, in every trouble and disappointment which makes us feel our weakness and helplessness, in every funeral bell whose solemn tones forewarn us of our own—"Turn unto the LORD your God." He calls us in every baffled

craving of our intellect, in every unsatisfied longing of our restless heart, in every grateful consciousness of undeserved mercy—"Turn unto the LORD your God." He calls us every time we come into this His house of prayer, every time we behold preparations for celebrating the Holy Communion, every time we listen to the reading of His Holy Word, and to the preaching of His ministers, every time we recognize the witnesses of His Presence and His kingdom in the world—"Turn unto the LORD your God." Wherefore, brethren, in this beginning of my temporary ministry amongst you, I most earnestly press home this question to my own heart and yours—Have we turned to our God? Amidst the wonderful privileges which God has given us in this place, with our opportunities of daily worship, and weekly communion,—with our manifold helps of refined education, of intercourse with the thoughtful and the pious, of examples of good works continually before us—with all this, have we turned our whole selves, and all our life, to God? Are we wise to understand what is His will concerning us? Are we "ready, both in body and soul, cheerfully to accomplish those things which He would have done?" Or, are we still "walking as fools,"—making light of the call of our King to His Feast, or sitting down with the guests without that Marriage garment which He requires? It is easy to test ourselves, brethren; even if we go no farther than the words of the Collect which we offer up this week.

1. "God is light; and in Him is no darkness at all." He is "the Father of lights, with whom is

no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Jesus, the one mediator, through whom we have access to Him, has said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." If, therefore, we have indeed turned to Him, and have fellowship with Him, in His Son, by His Spirit, our whole life will be filled with the light of His Presence. We shall no longer desire to put away the thought of Him, nor to hide ourselves from His judgment. For we shall know that He is, as the Collect describes Him, a "merciful God." We shall discern in Him a "bountiful goodness" to which we may ever appeal, and in which we may continually confide. And, therefore, we shall "cheerfully accomplish His will," "singing and making melody in our hearts unto the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father." If the realization of His Presence be terrifying to us,—if our worship and service be characterised by tormenting fears and dark distrust,—if the main object of our religion be to cover our transgressions from His sight, and escape the penalties of His broken law,—if there be no attractive power in our faith, no joy in our devotion, no cheerfulness in our obedience,—it is a sure sign that we have not yet wholly turned "unto the Lord our God."

2. Again, if our mind, our heart, and our life be wholly turned to God, and devoted to His service,—which is the true meaning of Conversion,—we shall continually accomplish, by the power of His Spirit, what we pray for in the Collect. We shall put away, and keep away from our life, "all things that may hurt us,"—all things that tend to hide the vision of

our God, to hinder the work of His grace, and to draw us from His kingdom. They are not a few great things that do this—glaring and scandalous sins committed now and then. The soul feels not the gradual and stealthy advance of Death: it loses its faith and love slowly, as the blighted tree its foliage and its fruit. Little by little it covers itself about with clouds, shuts out the blessed light of the Sun of Righteousness, and dies down to the dust of earth. Have you not often observed, at this season of the year, how the thin white veil of mist creeps upwards from the bosom of earth above the herbage and flowers; wreathes itself in cloudlets around trees and rocks and cottage homes; then gathers and gathers in the upper air, until the sun at last is shrouded, and the sky no more appears? So our little worldly cares,—cares about the home, the farm, and the merchandise,—and our little evil desires and indulgencies, gather about the surface of the heart, become deeper and deeper, rise higher and higher, until at last the Sunlight of the Presence of Jesus is hidden, and, lacking that, we slowly fall back into “the outer darkness” of spiritual death. O let us pray earnestly that the Spirit of truth and life, brooding in unceasing mercy over our souls, will scatter all our worldly clouds, and keep clear the Vision of our God!

3. One more test of Conversion, and I have done. “What wilt thou have me to do?” was the question of Saul of Tarsus, when there shined round about him a light from heaven, and he knew the Voice of the Lord Jesus. And this is the continual question of every man who has turned wholly and unreser-

vedly to God, and receives into His spirit the light of His Love. He cannot be idle and unprofitable: he can no more live *for* himself than *by* himself. S. John says—"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." So, we may add, He that is idle, doing nothing for the glory of God, and the good of man, knoweth not love; for love is energetic and active. We cannot trust our feelings: our words are soon forgotten. Works of love alone remain to tell us whose we are, and whither the stream of our life is tending. The time is fast coming when prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall vanish away: when there shall be no room for earnest contentions, and distracting controversies, and fair professions, and fine sentiments; when we shall find nothing to present before the open throne of our Divine King but the fruits of that active charity derivable from incorporation with Himself the true Vine. *Then*, my brethren, how shall *we* stand? What fruits will be found in us? Oh, when we judge ourselves by this test,—when we remember how much time we give up to self-indulgence and worldly vanities, how little we redeem for the service of CHRIST and His Church; when we think how many ignorant and sinful and miserable souls are perishing around us, whom we have done little to teach, to reclaim, and to comfort,—we cannot but be sadly conscious how hardly, even yet, the Heavenly light has penetrated to the roots of our being; how needful are the judgments of our God in the world, to arouse us from our indolence and insensibility; and how loudly and repeatedly must be sounded in our

ears,—even while we tread the courts of the Lord's House in the fulness of our knowledge, and with the multitude of our sacrifices,—“Turn unto the Lord your God.” May He in mercy recall all our hearts to His kingdom of love, and clothe them with the marriage garment of His righteousness, and fill them with His Spirit, and fit them more and more for His service on earth and in Heaven!

“Turn us again, Lord God of Hosts; shew the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole.”

SERMON II.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE DANGER OF FEVERISHNESS.

Proverbs i. 33. First Evening Lesson.

“WHOSO HEARKENETH UNTO ME SHALL DWELL SAFELY,
AND SHALL BE QUIET FROM FEAR OF EVIL.”

LAST Sunday Morning I endeavoured to show that in all the appointed services for the day—in the Gospel, the Epistle, the Collect, and the First Lessons—there is the same common warning against levity of mind and inconsiderateness; and there is the same test proposed to us of our true conversion to God. The Services for to-day plainly warn us against an opposite evil, to which we are all more or less liable,—restlessness, impatience, over excitement; or, to sum up all in one word, *feverishness*.

I. First, let us look, as we are bound to look, to the Gospel. It records the Healing of the Nobleman's Son at Capernaum; and we are distinctly told what was the nature of the child's sickness. “The fever left him.” This one sentence may well supply us with the text for the day; for we detect symptoms

of another kind of fever in those of whom we read. Observe, for instance, the feverish impatience of the nobleman, when he cried : " Sir, come down, ere my child die." And observe how in these words, " Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," the LORD rebukes a certain feverish looking out for visible proofs of God's presence, and sensible demonstrations of His power, which hinder so many from conversion to His Kingdom of Grace.

II. Secondly, look to the Epistle. When S. Paul exhorts the Ephesians, " Be strong in the LORD, and in the power of His might;" and when he goes on to say, " Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand," he is, in fact, warning them against that *feverishness* of which I have spoken. For, what is fever but weakness of system? And why do men require for the confirmation of their faith " signs and wonders?" Why do they cry out, in feverish impatience, " LORD, come down: let this or that happen to me: let me have more outward proofs that Thou art my Saviour, and more inward assurances of Thy salvation:" but because they are weak in the LORD? They cannot stand, as valiant soldiers of the Cross, covered with the panoply of God.

III. And then, look to the First Lesson for this morning. How striking is the contrast of characters presented in that one verse: " Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." Mark, on the one side, the proud Chaldean idolator, puffed up with conceit of his own

greatness and wisdom, confident in an arm of flesh ! There is no uprightness,—no steadiness, or harmony, or tranquility, in his life. He never “keepeth at home,”—never “dwelleth safely ;” but “enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied.” He is never at peace with his own soul, nor “quiet from fear of evil.” Mark, on the other side, the righteous servant of God, “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might ;” standing upon his watch, clothed with “the whole armour of God,” hearkening to the Voice of Heavenly Wisdom ! His alone is true life,—life full of peace and hope, and lasting joy. He, from the impregnable fortress of his faith, can look calmly forth upon the evils and confusions of the times,—“quiet from fear of evil,” because assured that “the Lord is in His holy Temple.”

IV. You will understand now, brethren, why, in the Collect, we are bidden to pray for “pardon and peace ;” and that we may serve God “with a quiet mind.” And you will further understand, I think, how the last words of this Evening’s First Lesson, which I read for my text, sum up the whole teaching of the day—“Whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

Now let me proceed to speak of that particular danger against which we are in many ways warned to-day,—the danger of restlessness, or feverishness of soul.

1. Behold it in its worst and saddest form, in the fallen child of Grace, self-exiled from the Kingdom of God, who has now become the servant of the

world. He is not, we will suppose, a poor, ignorant, thoughtless, senseless being, like too many around us. He is not spending a mere animal existence, groveling in the dust of earth, with no glorious hopes, and no Heavenly aspirations. He has gone through what are called the usual courses of a refined Christian education. He has been taught to pray, to read and learn the Bible, to seek the means of Grace, to discern the paths of Righteousness, to look up to the best examples. His faculties, his tastes, and his sympathies have been in early youth kindly trained by those who loved him dearly, in a well-ordered Christian home. And they sent him forth to the battle of human life, with many prayers and hopes. But he soon began to show that he was "a proud man;" swayed indeed by the very worst kind of pride. He determined to shake off the yoke of authority, to listen to no spiritual counsel from without; but to rule himself after the sight of his own eyes, and the judgment of his own mind. He forsook the guide of his youth, and forgot the covenant of his God. Then he was drawn under the influence of evil companionships, and listened to temptation, and yielded to the seduction of unlawful pleasure. He gave up regular prayer, and the study of God's Word; and would fain drug his crying conscience with the miserable sophistries of false philosophy. And what is he now?—that man of cultivated mind, of well-stored knowledge, of refined tastes, of rich imagination, of warm feelings, of large sympathies,—who is dreaming of spinning out a bright existence apart from Him Who is the "Light of Life;"—what is he now? Is not

his state truly described in this Morning's First Lesson? He "keepeth not at home." He cannot; the society of those whose counsels he despised is painful to him. The very "stones" seem to "cry out of the wall" of his childhood's home, to testify against what he has made himself. He must have continual excitements, fresh companionships, new pleasures. Ah! how soon the dreadful heart-fever begins to show itself now! He "enlargeth his desire as Hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied." He is made to feel that selfish pleasure is a very hard master, allowing little time for repose, and, in the very midst of repletion, crying "Give, give." So his years fleet by, finding him still unhappy in the midst of gaiety, and unsatisfied in the midst of excess; conscious of a poverty of inner life which no charity of his fellow creatures can relieve, and a famine of heart for which the whole round of nature can find no food. Oh that his pride would now at last give way;—that he would return and seek that merciful Saviour Who is waiting to receive him;—that he would cry in the child-like spirit of genuine penitence, "LORD, I have been hitherto walking as a fool in mine own self-chosen ways: I am most weak, because I would not be strong in Thee. But now I give myself to Thee, the true Master of my life. Speak but the word, and the fever will leave me!" If, however, he will not repent, he must soon realize in himself that melancholy description which the Lord has given of the unclean spirit. "He walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none." * * * * * And then, when his days draw to a close, he will be as the

traveller who, in his curiosity, would climb to the top of a burning mountain. Looking back, he sees but the ashes of death, through which he has forced his hot and toilsome way: looking down, there is but a gulph of fire, which in a moment might receive him.

2. And now, Brethren, behold this same *feverishness* in the mere intellectual man,—the man who makes it not his first object to be wise unto salvation, and to be filled with the Spirit of Truth; who gathers unto himself the treasures of earthly knowledge only for the embellishment of his mind, that he may display them to his fellow men; who exercises the powers of his intellect, as the athlete his muscles, only that he may gain the mastery over others, for fame or for reward; who delights to use his gifts of reason rather in questioning than in defending the “Faith once delivered to the Saints.” How soon in such a mind as this the *feverishness* begins to manifest itself! The man finds that he cannot keep pace with the marvellous increase of knowledge which characterises the age. Books are multiplied beyond the largest compass of the richest and most industrious student. Ideas upon ideas, theories upon theories, questions upon questions, doctrines upon doctrines, rise to the surface, chase each other, and break upon each other, rapidly as the bubbles in the eddies of a mountain stream. His bewildered mind loses itself in endless speculations. He is tossed on a sea of perpetual doubt. Truth seems ever flying before him, leaving him no rest or peace. The utmost he can attain unto is the knowledge of his own ignorance and helpless-

ness, and haply a growing conviction that if he is to "dwell safely," "quiet from fear of evil," it must be by reverently hearkening to the Voice of Wisdom from Heaven,—the Voice at once of God in Man and Man in God.

3. Once more, Brethren, behold how the evil works in the irregular religion of some of the Christian sects. There are who plainly tell us they have no confidence in a spiritual life which does not begin with signs and wonders. They must be able to point to something at least analogous to what St. Paul passed through at his conversion. They must have been smitten down by a great flood of light from Heaven. They must have heard the Voice of JESUS speaking to them individually, at a certain time, under certain circumstances. And every future stage of life's growth must be marked by some "wonder." Wherefore, we behold these feverish spirits running from building to building, and from preacher to preacher, crying for fresh excitements, fresh signs of the presence and the power of JESUS; too often, alas! mistaking the ravings of spiritual delirium for signs of strong life in the LORD.

To come nearer home; are we, Brethren, without symptoms of the same in the Church of England? Mark the feverish restlessness of our party contentions, our controversies, our agitating meetings, our continual protests and petitions! Mark with what impatient eagerness men are looking out for signs of Romanism in one direction, and for signs of Rationalism in another! How they start and cry out at things which, to the wise man, are but shadows; just as

the poor fever patient cries out at the spectral creations of his own hot brain. Mark that feverish sighing for a visible union with other parts of Christendom, which it has not pleased God to give us ! Mark again that feverish craving after new excitements of external worship, and ceremonial developments, which our fathers rejected as unwholesome, which our spiritual rulers generally forbid as inexpedient, which the majority of our Brethren of the Anglican Communion regard with aversion and alarm ! O Brethren, well may we bow ourselves down to-day before the Presence of the Divine Healer, and pray that, at His Word, the fever may wholly leave us ; that we may henceforth serve Him "with a quiet mind."

II. Not, however, to dwell longer upon the disease, the symptoms of which you will clearly understand, let me, in conclusion, briefly point out some few remedies for it, and antidotes against it. For these we need not go beyond the services appointed for to-day.

1. Look to this Morning's First Lesson. The Prophet Habbakuk himself had once suffered from a fever of over anxiety : the very chapter before this is a confession of it. When he beheld "iniquity" and "grievance," "spoiling and violence," "strife and contention," wasting the strength and threatening the life of the Holy Nation ; and when he was shewed "the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation * * * terrible and dreadful," flying, "as the eagle that hasteth to eat," to become God's ministers of judgment and correction,—his heart was disquieted within him, and he did not hesitate to pour out his com-

plaint, and cry "Wherefore?" His secret heart implored, even as the Nobleman in the Gospel, "Lord, come down." He almost asked for "signs and wonders" that he "might believe." And what brought him peace? What made him "quiet from fear of evil?" It was, Brethren, when he "stood upon his watch," and hearkened to the Voice of Wisdom from Heaven. It was when he grasped to his heart of hearts the great reality of the Personal Presence of God in His Church. "The Lord is in His Holy Temple." This simple confession made the storm to cease in his own life, and shewed a rainbow in the blackest clouds that hung over his nation and the world beyond. It is this same spirit of faith,—simple child-like faith,—which we all so much need at the present time. It is easy to say we believe in "God's Presence;" but it is by no means so easy "to live by our faith"—to keep our minds ever open to receive His Word, to keep our hearts ever free to accomplish His will, and to keep our lives ever ready to be ordered by His commandments. We must be assured that "the God of all Grace," our ever merciful Father, who once spake unto us by His Son, is still speaking to us in that Son by His Spirit. We must hearken to that Voice, not once or twice in our lives,—not only in times of trouble, and sorrow, and pain, and loss,—not only on the sick bed, or by the grave side, or in the darkened home of bereavement;—but by every common way, and in every common work of our whole lives. And more; we must assure ourselves continually that "the Lord is in His Holy Temple." In this Church, as often as we meet for common

worship, we must be sure that Jesus is indeed, according to His promise, "in the midst of us." When we draw near to the Holy Sacrament, it must be in the power of a true faith, to realize His own words, "My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed." "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in Him. * * * He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." We must feel His healing and absolving Hand upon our sick and fevered hearts. We must hear His Voice say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee: go in peace." Then—then only—shall we go forth to "serve" Him "with a quiet mind," no matter what may be our own private trials, or the troubles of the world around us.

2. And this, at once, directs our minds to the Collect. We are there taught to pray for peace; but first for pardon. We ask that we may serve God "with a quiet mind;" but first that "we may be cleansed from all our sins." They are the disturbers of our lives. They keep us from being "strong in the Lord," and make the fever within us, and rob us of God's most blessed gift of rest, and will bring us, if we be not delivered from them, to eternal death. Wherefore, let us hide them not, neither spare them. Let us spread them all out before Him Whose precious Blood alone can cleanse us from the past, and Whose Spirit alone can save us in the future. When He says, "Thy sins be forgiven Thee," He says also "Go in Peace."

3. Once more, look to the Epistle. If we would have the fever leave us, and be secure against its heart-wasting power,—if we would have the just

man's calm life of faith,—we must “be strong in the Lord.” Not strong in the pride of our own wisdom and virtue,—having our “soul lifted up” in us;—not strong in self-made resolutions and loud professions; but strong in the might of the Spirit of the Lord; strong through the intercession of our great High Priest; strong by faithful and earnest prayer; strong in the whole armour of God. “Praying always”—as St. Paul bids us; for Prayer itself is strength: watching always; for we have ever to “stand against the wiles of the devil.” So watching, trusting, praying, standing in the panoply of God, we shall “Dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil.”

SERMON III.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE STAY OF HOPE.

Romans viii. 24.

“WE ARE SAVED BY HOPE.”

EACH Sunday in Advent brings home to faithful hearts a distinct and particular call of God. The first, throughout all its specially appointed services, calls to the exercise of Faith; the second to the exercise of Hope; the third to Active Love; the fourth to Calm Assurance, and Joyful Expectation. It will not be difficult, I think, to make you clearly understand this. Take one verse in the First Lesson for last Sunday morning as a key to the whole teaching of the season. It is written, “The daughter of Zion,”—that is, the faithful Church of God,—“is left as a besieged city.” Let us keep this image continually before our minds.

The Church is “the City of the Great King.” He has purchased it to Himself for a possession: He has claimed it for Himself as a right for ever. He has bestowed upon it the best laws, and provided for

the wisest administration of those laws. He has secured whatsoever can give strength and glory to the city,—peace, prosperity, and happiness to the citizens. Having done this, He has departed for a time to His Father's court, that He may obtain for them even yet higher privileges, and more abundant blessings. He has forewarned them that He will come at an hour when many look not for Him; and therefore must all continually watch. But time passes on, and still He delays His return. And so it has come to pass that many have grown weary of watching, and forgetful of His commands: many more are beginning to question and to doubt the fulfilment of His promise: some even scoff at the idea of His coming. Meanwhile the forces of the enemy gather more closely around the city, counting for future success upon the faithlessness of those within. But suddenly, at midnight,—at a time when most of the citizens have abandoned themselves to self indulgence,—messengers arrive from afar; and the cry is heard which came to the Jewish people, as recorded in last Sunday's Gospel—“Thy King cometh unto thee.” Now, under such circumstances, what is the first thing required of those citizens? Is it not Faith? They must trust the messengers, and believe the truth of their message. They must assure themselves that their King is indeed at hand, and they must give evidence of this assurance by casting off “the works of darkness,”—by coming forth from the selfish pleasure and slumber to which they had given themselves up; by clothing themselves at once with the bright armour provided by the King Himself; by taking their places upon the ramparts,

and faithfully performing their allotted duties, seeking only to be approved in the sight of their LORD when He appears. It was to this, you will remember, we were called last Sunday.

But would the citizens be content with this? Would it be any real honour to the King, if they only believed that He is coming, and, from any motive, in any spirit, set themselves to prepare for Him? Would they not, in proportion as they remembered and appreciated all that He had done for them, and in proportion as they loved His Person,—would they not add to their faith Hope? Would they not look out for, and hail with delight, every sign of His nearer approach? Would they not cherish every thought and feeling calculated to make them “hold fast,” and “abound in” this hope? And this, Brethren, is what we are exhorted to do to-day.

Still further,—with reference to the teaching of the Third Sunday in Advent,—those citizens, if they were good and true men, would not be content to know that they themselves were ready, each in his place, each at his work. They would exert themselves to the utmost of their power in preparing their city, as well as themselves, for their King. They would endeavour to arouse the careless, to convince the doubting, to strengthen the weak, and comfort the helpless. And then, having done all in their power for themselves and for their fellow citizens, there is nothing left for them but calmly to await the morning’s dawn, watching against temptation, keeping down doubt and fear, and, in the beautiful language of the First Morning Lesson for the Sunday

before Christmas, "in quietness and confidence" finding their "strength." And this is the blessed state of mind to which the Last Sunday in Advent calls us.

You see, then, Brethren, that to-day we must endeavour to trace, through all the appointed services, a call to the exercise of Hope.

I. And first, let us turn, according to the principle which I have more than once explained, to the Gospel. Our Blessed Lord says, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Those things which will make the hearts of unbelievers to fail them for fear,—those signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the perplexed and distressed earth, which clearly forbode the last great catastrophe,—are to be regarded by His people, the Lord tells them, as the shooting forth into bud of the tree in the dreary winter time: they are to be calls to joyful Hope, pledges and promises of a glorious summer time coming on.

II. Look next to the Epistle. S. Paul teaches us that the "things which were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we,"—we Christians in all ages of the Church—"through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope." And he prays that "the God of Hope" will fill us "with all joy and peace in believing" that we may "abound in Hope."

III. And, therefore, in the Collect we pray that we "may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed Hope of everlasting life, which God has given us in our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST."

What then, Brethren, is the rightful place, and what the distinctive work of Hope in the Christian life?

St. Paul says, "We are saved by Hope." In another place He teaches that "By Grace ye are saved through Faith;" and Faith "worketh by Love." We can hardly, therefore, separate Faith, Hope, and Love, in the work of salvation. They are to our spiritual life what the breath, the moisture, and the heat are to our bodily existence. As the warmth may be said to depend upon the circulation, and that upon the breath; as neither of these can alone maintain the life of the body; so love for its work depends upon the exercise of Hope, and Hope requires the presence of Faith: none without the other being able to maintain the life of the regenerate spirit. By Faith we hear the Word of Salvation; by Hope we receive the promises of God in CHRIST; by Love we perform all His will concerning us. And thus alone we truly live on earth, and gain the assurance of eternal life in Heaven.

But the context seems to require that we take the word "saved" in its narrower sense of "preserved" or "sustained." S. Paul has written, just before, "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God. * * * * And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." That is—to give the general interpretation of this difficult passage—as the lower creation, suffering the consequences of our sin, may

be said to be living in earnest hope of our coming glory, even the manifestation of the Sons of God; so we ourselves are earnestly hoping for the full blessedness of our sonship. At present, "the sufferings of this present time" make it hard to realize our membership of the Family of God. "The corruptible body presseth down the incorruptible soul." We groan under the oppression of our own evil. We are longing for the time when our bodies shall be set free from corruption and death, and when every sign of misery and ruin shall pass away from God's beautiful creation around us. Meanwhile we are saved by Hope. We are sustained and cheered by the certainty of that "glorious liberty of the Son of God," which is pledged to us by the Resurrection and Ascension of our Head. We can endure any "sufferings of this present time," in hope of "the glory that shall be revealed in us." If Faith may be likened to the net wherewith we gather our thoughts and affections, that we may devote them to God, out of the great deep of human life; Hope is as the cork to keep that net from sinking. If Faith assures us of the unchanging light of the Son of Righteousness in Heaven; Hope shows the rainbow upon the blackest clouds that gather above us. If Faith teaches us that our life on earth is but a pilgrimage to our true Home in Heaven; Hope is the cheering light and the sustaining staff of that pilgrimage. It is, indeed, the spring of all active service, and the consolation of all needful tribulation. Leave us Hope,—and there are no trials we cannot struggle through; there are no losses and pains we cannot endure. Take away Hope,—and we have

nothing to lean upon, nothing to lighten our way. We are at the best but shadows in pursuit of shadows : we are dead while we live to all that makes the glory and the joy of life.

But I must hasten to make a more direct application of the subject to our own case. And, in doing this, I shall take the liberty of dividing those who now hear me into two distinct classes.

First, I will address myself to those who seldom, or never, come to the Holy Communion ; and many such I fear there are in every congregation of English Church people.

It may, at first, sound somewhat startling, but indeed it will be found perfectly true, that many are kept from this great blessing simply by lack or loss of Hope. You may remember that on one of the Sundays after Trinity, when we prayed in the Collect for the increase of Faith, Hope, and Charity, I showed you how beautifully the Gospel, which contains the narrative of the cleansing of the Ten Lepers, illustrates the necessity of these three graces in the work of Salvation. All those ten men had Faith in CHRIST's Office : they recognized in Him the appointed Fountain of Cleansing. And Faith it was which prompted their cry—"JESUS, Master, have mercy upon us." All, too, had Hope in CHRIST's Word ; so that, when He said, "Go, show yourselves to the Priests," they immediately went, assured that somehow this would bring about their cleansing. And then came a separation. All had not Love for CHRIST's person, or all would have returned, and not only one, to give glory to God, and thanks to their Healer ; for gratitude is the first-born of Love.

Now let us suppose that when JESUS said "Go, show yourselves to the Priests," these men had reasoned with themselves thus: "Of what avail will it be to go to the Priests? How can cleansing come but from His very Presence?" Suppose, in fact, they had exercised no Hope in CHRIST's Word; would their former belief have availed to save them? Would JESUS have withdrawn His command, and saved them without the means which He had appointed? This exactly describes the state of many amongst ourselves. They believe that God has sent His Son into the world to save the world. They believe that He can cleanse the leprosy of sin which has covered the soul of man with the signs of death. But, because they do not feel how terribly that uncleanness has laid hold of their moral nature;—because they do not realize of how much present glory it robs them, and how far it puts from them the Kingdom of Heaven;—or because they have no earnest desire to be saved from that which spreads its deadly fascination over their whole souls;—therefore they exercise no Hope in the means of Salvation which the SAVIOUR has Himself ordained. They come and cry to Him; but they will not go whither He directs their steps. In sight of Life, they linger in the shadow of death; because they cannot trust His word. He has said, "Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life;" and again, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." He has plainly pointed out, in the institution of the Holy Communion, one great means whereby this unspeakable gift may be obtained. But they will not even try the means

which they themselves recognize and allow : because they have, as I said, no true Hope in their Master's words. They judge themselves unworthy of the Bread of Life. And so, for want of trustful Hope, whatever faith they had soon stagnates into dead belief, like a lake whose waters can find no outlet, and which the winds of Heaven cannot come near to stir into healthy motion. They are, in short, exactly as those ten lepers would have been, if, after crying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us," they had remained waiting for His cleansing power, without trying the means which He had commanded them to use.

Secondly, let me address myself to those who habitually communicate. There is, indeed, a most true sense in which we, who are drawn by Faith to this Holy Sacrament, must be "saved by Hope." Bishop Taylor has beautifully said, "Hope is like the wing of an angel, soaring up to Heaven, and bearing our prayers to the throne of God." May we not extend this image, and say that Faith, Hope, and Love, are like three angels sent to minister to the soul that would approach CHRIST, and gain the full blessedness of His Presence? Faith leads us to Him, and shows His Salvation. Hope raises up our hearts to Him, to bring down the treasures of His Grace. And then Love must bear us forth from His Presence, to live upon what Faith and Hope have gained. If we come to the Holy Communion only because we feel it to be our duty to come;—because we believe that Jesus is calling us thither, and we dare not despise His voice;—because He has said, "Do this in remembrance of

Me," and we cannot bear to disobey His last command;—even then, we shall surely gain a blessing; for the simple knowledge that we are doing our duty is no light blessing. But can we be satisfied with this? No, indeed. We come because we believe that He offers us propitiation, and salvation, and life, and rest; and we hope assuredly to obtain those blessings. We come because we know that we have many temptations to overcome, many crosses to bear, many responsibilities to fulfil; and we hope for strength, for virtue, for comfort, and for peace. We come that by Faith we may set JESUS before us, and commemorate all that He has done for us, and all that He is to us: we come also that by Hope we may draw Him to us, and enter into Him, and live by Him, and follow His example on earth, that we may be like unto Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom.

O Brethren, it is but little indeed that the deepest and farthest reaching Faith can shew us of Him Whom we love and long for, and Whose Advent we are now celebrating. As the rare bright radiance of the noon-day Sun, streaming through that east window, reflects upon the wall and pavement beneath, never the perfect figure, nor even the full outline, of the forms depicted there, but only a few broken fleeting colours, of red, and blue, and orange; and these, could we see no more, would but make us long to behold the entire image of beauty whereof they form a part; so when, standing upon our Advent watch, with the Volume of the Divine Word open before us, we strive to realize the presence of Him Who is coming, we

can but trace a few scattered rays of Truth, and Goodness, and Love: no human imagination can embrace Him as He is, and as He will soon be seen. But Hope carries us away from the shadows of the present, and anticipates the glorious Day of Redemption, and enables us to say, "We have found our God, and we need no more: we have found our SAVIOUR, and fear has passed away." Yes, indeed; fear has passed away. For, though Advent tells us again and again of judgment to come, we know that "the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son. * * * and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also; because He is the Son of Man." How can we be afraid to meet Him, that Good Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep; and who prayed for His murderers on the Cross? Let us only fear ourselves; lest we should lose our faith in Him, and give up our joyful watch of Hope, and leave our work of Love undone. When men's hearts are "failing them for fear," as they listen to the warnings of the LORD'S Advent, O may we be able to "Count them as minute bells at night, keeping our hearts awake." As in the neighbourhood of dock-yards, all through the night, ship tells unto ship that each is watching for the morning, and ready for the foe; so in the commemoration of this Holy Season, let heart tell unto heart, and church unto church, and generation unto generation, that the morning of the Resurrection is looked for, that the world is watched against, that the Word of the King is obeyed, and that His faithful people are ready for His coming, at what hour soever He may come!

SERMON IV.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE STRENGTH OF CALM CONFIDENCE.

Isaiah xxx. 15. First Morning Lesson.

"IN QUIETNESS AND IN CONFIDENCE SHALL BE YOUR STRENGTH."

You will not, I trust, have forgotten the image which I set before you in my last Sermon, and which, I said, will best help us to interpret the whole connected teaching of the Sundays in Advent. "The daughter of Zion,"—the Church of the redeemed,— "is left as a besieged city." We suppose, then, that through all that city has now been heard the call, "Thy King cometh unto thee." Many have believed that call. They have come forth from the "works of darkness,"—from the evil and lawless courses of conduct which they would not bear to be judged by their King; and they have put on the bright armour in which He would have them arrayed. They have taken their places upon the ramparts, and, animated by the prospect of His coming to deliver them, boldly defy their foes. Moreover, because they remember all that their King has done for them,—because they

know the kindness and goodness of His character,—they hope for His coming. They lift up their heads to hail every sign of His arrival. Still further, because they are assured that He will come, and because they are hoping for His coming, they have done their utmost to prepare their city as well as themselves for His presence. They have endeavoured to arouse the slumbering and indifferent, to convince the doubting, and to help the weak. Then, “having done all,” they stand in calm expectation of His approach. They stand in that spirit so beautifully described in the Epistle;—rejoicing in their King; letting their “moderation,” their power of self-restraint, “be known unto all men;” over-anxious for nothing; with the true peace which springs from Faith, and Hope, and Love, ruling their hearts and minds.

So, we will suppose, the night has run out. The first streak of the dawn has grown into the light of the morning: the Sun has risen upon the earth: and yet He has not come. Meanwhile the besieging hosts, emboldened by traitors from the city,—men who are afraid to meet their Master,—grow more clamorously defiant, and threaten immediate destruction. Then comes their hour of strongest temptation. Some begin to ask themselves, What if He should not come? Would it not be better to make terms with the enemy, while there is yet time? Without positively disobeying the King’s commands, should we not be justified in accommodating those commands to the crisis upon which we are fallen? May we not now have recourse to certain expedients which under any other circumstances we should have shrunk from? Thus they

gradually lose their rejoicing in their King's coming : their " moderation " is weakened : they are hurried to and fro by " carefulness : " their peace dies down ; and they are liable to fall into fatal errors.

Now, Brethren, this truly describes the state of God's people at the time when Isaiah wrote that portion of his prophecy, read to us in this morning's First Lesson.

God had again and again reminded them of the everlasting covenant made with His people ; and had assured them that in His good time it should be fulfilled. He had told them that the life of the Holy Nation should surely be preserved ; though, " like a tell tree or an oak," it might be stripped of its leaves and its branches. He had exhorted them to Faith ;—to trust in Him for evermore, knowing that Salvation was in Him. He had exhorted them to Hope ;—to know that out of all these manifold confusions and evils, His glorious kingdom was being evolved, and that His very judgements were but witnesses of that kingdom. He had exhorted them to Love ;—to hearken unto His word by His Prophets, to follow after His righteousness, and accomplish His work in the world. He had promised that, though the battlements of the Holy City might be taken away, and her walls laid low, she should be restored to a magnificence before unknown, and to a strength evermore irresistible. But, alas ! many of His people were growing weary of waiting for the day of His power. They were taking counsel, but not of Him. They were seeking out their own ways of salvation. They were taking unto themselves for allies and friends

those who served not God. They "walked to go down to Egypt; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt." Many said, when they saw the Assyrian invader, God's minister of chastisement, coming up against them, "We will ride upon horses; * * * * we will flee upon the swift;" when they ought rather to have said, "We will trust in our God: we will do His will, and leave our cause with Him." God, therefore, tells them that their only hope of safety was "in returning,"—returning to their own land; and "in rest,"—resting upon His Name. He tells them that their strength was "in quietness and confidence;"—standing upon their watch, like Habakkuk, listening for the voice of their invisible King.

Now, hardly could you fail to notice, Brethren, how, in all parts of the special services for this day, we are called to this same spirit of "quietness and confidence," even a calm and joyous expectation of our Master's Advent.

I. Observe it in the Gospel, which we shall best understand by comparing it with that for last Sunday. There we saw John the Baptist, as one born of woman, in the hour of his humiliation. How weak was he in the excitement of his doubting! Because his work seemed suddenly brought to an end by his imprisonment in the Castle of Machærus,—because the Kingdom of Heaven did not advance according to his mind,—he sends to ask "Art thou He that should come? or do we look for another?" To-day we behold him in the hour of his glory. How strong is he in his quiet confidence in God and in CHRIST! There

is not a shadow of doubt upon his mind respecting his own ministry, or the work of his Master. He "confessed, and denied not;" but confessed at once that he was not the immortal Word of Salvation: he was but the dying voice proclaiming that Word. What a grandeur there is in His humility! What a depth and breadth and height of Faith in His confession! "There standeth One among you whom ye know not: He it is who is preferred before me." How, in these simple words, He directs His interrogators and His disciples to the one source of rejoicing, the one motive of moderation, the one cure of anxiety!

II. Then how plainly we hear the same exhortation in the Epistle! "The LORD is at hand." This is the great truth of the season. JESUS, your King, whom ye now "know not" in the flesh, but only in the spirit, is about to reveal Himself in His eternal glory; therefore, "Rejoice in the LORD always. Let your moderation be known unto all men. Be careful for nothing." If, Brethren, we are indeed able to rejoice, *in looking back*; because we behold not our sins, but Him who has redeemed us from them by His death, and washed them away in His Blood;—if we are able to keep our hearts and minds under calm restraint, *in the present*; because we know that God in CHRIST is One with us, and we with Him, and that the Grace of His Holy Spirit is sufficient for us;—if we are able to cast away all carking care *about the future*; because we know that our Heavenly Father, for His Son's sake, will certainly provide all that we need, and will shortly reveal His eternal and glorious kingdom;—then have we gathered the best

fruit of our LORD's Advent; and to realize this should be the one hope and aim of our life.

III. Now, if we turn to the Collect, wherein we are wont to gather up and express before God the main truth of the services, we certainly find no allusion to that spirit of quiet confidence whereof I have spoken. And this appears to me one of the most beautiful features in the services for the day. We do not pray for a spirit of joy, of moderation, and freedom from anxiety; but we do pray that He will "come among us, and with great might succour us," Whose Presence is the source of all these blessings: we do pray that He will deliver us from "our sins and wickedness," which we know to be the sure hinderers and destroyers of our peace, keeping our hearts restless as the troubled sea.

You see, then, Brethren, what is that blessed state of mind unto which the Church would bring us, as the best result of her Advent teaching;—the state of mind in which we shall certainly be best prepared to meet our LORD. We are to be strong in that Faith which, "seeing the invisible," and realizing the "kingdom which cannot be moved," "overcometh the world." We are to be strong in that Hope which, entering "into that within the vail," becomes an "anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast." We are to be strong in that Love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things," for His sake who gave Himself for us. And we are to acquire and cultivate this spiritual strength "in quietness and confidence;" not in gloomy recollections of the past, and restless expedients for

the present, and anxious forebodings of the future; but in that "peace of God" which keeps both heart and mind in continual gladness, and watchfulness, and self-restraint; filling the whole life with the sweet melody of devotion and praise. And who can doubt that this spirit pervades the whole teaching of the Church? Many of you know that the revered Author of the "Christian Year" has adopted the text as the motto to that book, so dear, as a devotional help, to members of the Church of England. He himself, in the preface, explains the reason of this selection. He speaks of "the peculiar happiness of the Church of England in possessing a sober standard of feeling, as well as a sound rule of faith," in times "when excitement of every kind is sought after with a morbid eagerness." He notices the "soothing tendency of the teaching of the Prayer Book." That tendency,—that continual call to "quietness and confidence,"—is, I fear, by some not sufficiently realized or appreciated. They would even have the Prayer Book more controversial, and more exciting in its spirit and tone. It is too calm and cold, they judge, for the restless temper of the age. Not so judge God's best servants and highest saints in the Church. Not so they who "through much tribulation,—through mighty storms of temptation, and scorching fires of sorrow,—have been brought to a realization of the Kingdom of Heaven. They are thankful to stand calmly on the solid ground of the Divine Love, revealed in Jesus, and communicated by the Spirit, made over and sealed to each faithful soul in the Holy Sacraments. They know how precious it is to have an anchorage of the

soul, sure and steadfast, far below the breaking waves of controversy.

Oh, Brethren, if we, who regard the Prayer Book of our Father's Church as the best witness of "the Faith once delivered to the Saints," the purest reflection on earth of "the Truth as it is in Jesus,"—if we had but the courage to take its teaching as we find it, and consistently live up to it;—if we were but content to learn what our life is, and whence it is derived, from the Baptismal Service; and what that life may become, and how it is to be nourished, from the Office for the Holy Communion;—if we could but retain those deep impressions of Truth which came to us from the special services of the Church,—when we received our first child back from the Font, and knelt down and prayed for him;—or when we came hungering and thirsting after righteousness to our first Communion;—or when, on our marriage day, the blessing of CHRIST's minister fell upon us, as we knelt before the Altar, united until death with one chosen out of the world to be as our second self;—or, when we stood beside the open grave, after the first sad rent in the family circle;—if, I say, we could but remain as little affected by the distracting controversies of the times as we were then,—I believe we should at once own, with glad and grateful heart, that there is indeed, even here on earth, a fulfilment of those beautiful words of prophecy, which will be read to us in the First Lesson for this evening: "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." And we should know that the "effect of righteousness" is indeed "quietness and assurance for ever."

IV. Let me now, as briefly as I can, suggest some means by which this spirit of calm and confident expectation of our LORD's Advent may be preserved and cultivated. And here the different parts of the services for the day will supply us with all the instruction we can need.

1. Remember the humbling confession we have made in the Collect. We have said that "we are sore let and hindred in running the race set before us," not by the opposition of evil from without; but by our own "sins and wickedness." These, then, are the great enemies of our peace which we have first to overcome and cast out. For how can we know "quietness" of spiritual life, as long as we are attempting to cover and conceal the evil which our consciences condemn? How can we gain that joy, that moderation, and freedom from anxiety, which St. Paul calls us to, while we cannot bear to face the full revelation of our past lives, and tremble at the thought of judgment to come? Or, how can we have "confidence" in God, while we are ever trying to hide ourselves from His presence, nor dare to open out our whole hearts before Him? Must not Peace be the work of Righteousness? and can there be righteousness in this sinful world without Repentance? If, however, it has pleased God to bring us to true Repentance;—if we have, with deep sorrow, and full purpose of amendment, confessed our sins, and faithfully used every means which JESUS has appointed for our cleansing;—then, we must let nothing disturb our calm confidence in Him whose "bountiful grace and mercy" will "speedily help and deliver us, for

the satisfaction of His Son." Having turned our whole life to Him, we may "let the dead Past bury its dead." For verily the Past, considered as a portion of Time, is dead, when we have gathered out of it penitence, heavenly wisdom, and spiritual experience; after this it is folly to brood over what can never be undone.

2. Think of those grand words of Faith which John the Baptist found sufficient at once to answer all the doubts of his own mind, and to meet the captious enquiries of those who sent unto him. "There standeth One among you whom ye know not." If once we can bring ourselves thus to believe in the Presence of our LORD;—if we know that He is with us in every scene and work of life, that He leads us along every path, that He enters into all our feelings and shares our secret burdens,—then shall we find a spring of perpetual joy, a motive of continual self-restraint, a deliverance from all anxiety; then shall we never lack "strength" to maintain our place in His kingdom of Love, to bear witness unto His Truth, to work and to suffer for His Name's sake. In His light we shall see light. As when we enter this Church, and look at its windows from within, with our faces towards the light, we trace their true proportions, and can admire their beauty; but if we go without, and turn our backs from the light, and judge them thus, how unmeaning, how unworthy of admiration they appear! So, Brethren,—if only we keep within the Presence of JESUS, and turn ourselves to His Light, we shall read the meaning of all human life; we shall trace the beauty and goodness of all

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So, brethren, should it be with ourselves. In contentious days, when things so contemptibly too often divide man from man, and brother from brother, let us be united at least in one thing, in the blessed work of preparing the way of our common King. After all, there is no assurance to our own hearts of the truth of our faith, and the reality of our hope, like hearty work. It is good for us to look forward to the prospect of the last Judgment Day, to lift up a penitential cry; it is good for us to re-double our prayers and holy resolutions. But oh, better far, all, to devote ourselves heart and soul to the work which He calls us to do. To each one of us, high or low, rich or poor, His messenger calls at this moment: "Make straight the way of the LORD." Are there not many deep valleys to be filled up in our hearts and lives—doubts to be removed, sorrows to be comforted, wants to be relieved? What are we doing to help them? Are there not in our hearts mountains of pride, and little hills of self-conceit, which overtop the righteous claims of our brethren, and shut them from them the blessed light of God's love? What are we doing to bring these mountains and hills down?

Are there not crooked ways in ourselves, in the world around us, needing to be made straight? Are there things out of agreement with the one measure of God's Law in CHRIST,—false codes, unjust judgments, winding policies? What are we doing to make them straight?

Are there not rough places, rough temperaments, and cruel dispositions, envious thoughts, and plottings, harsh and forbidding ways? What are we doing to smooth them out?

Ask yourselves, then, Brethren, before you leave this place,—what good thing can I do to witness to myself, and to others, that I am indeed looking for, and hoping for, the Advent of my Redeemer, the LORD of Love?

This very morning I humbly venture to press upon you one special means of doing good.

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I pray God that this solemn season, as it closes, may find us all strong in that spirit of quiet confidence of which I have spoken;—with all our sins and wickedness repented of and forgiven, with all our life gathered into the Light of the Presence of JESUS, and with all our powers and all our energies devoted to the work of preparing His way!

SERMON V.

THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

Isaiah xxxviii. 14.

“O LORD, I AM OPPRESSED: UNDERTAKE FOR ME.”

It requires some thought and consideration clearly to understand why the Church has chosen the history of Hezekiah to be read on this Sunday after Christmas, the last Sunday in the year. And then there appear certain deep and wise reasons for this selection. We have just celebrated the birth into the world of our Divine King. We have gathered from inspired Prophecy, and woven into a Christmas song of joy and praise the thrilling words—“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the Government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” “The government shall be upon His shoulder,” because He is a Child born unto us, of our nature, and a Son given unto us from above, in the Divine nature. Only such an one can be the Father of an everlasting age,

the eternal Ruler of the family of man. Only a government resting upon the shoulders of Divinity, united with Humanity, can secure perpetual increase. Humanity, standing alone, however mighty, however eminently gifted, unsupported by Divinity, *must* fail to rule immortal creatures. All states and kingdoms depending upon such a government can but fulfil this simple destiny—to rise, to flourish, and to decay. But what the best and truest men have ever longed for is to be invested with the privileges of a state which *must* flourish, but cannot decay. Such is the kingdom set up in the world by Him who was born at this season in a stable at Bethlehem. Herein lies the great Mystery, which, while it baffles all the powers of the mind to comprehend it, fulfils all the best and deepest longings of the heart prepared to receive it.

We may, then, understand that the Church, in providing the first Lessons for to-day, would teach as much as this:—If you would realize the full blessings communicated to you in the birth of your King—if you would see the necessity of the coming of such an one to rule you, and the world around you,—if you would be convinced of the utter impossibility of a perfect government of yourself, your country and every country, by man without God,—if, as the years fleet past, you would have more and more impressed upon you, and would impress upon all within reach of your influence, the unspeakable privilege of being in the Kingdom of Messias,—*then*, study the history of Hezekiah. It is distinctly said of him, that there was no king like him, before or after. Even

Isaiah foresaw in his glorious reign the truest type of *the King's*. Those glorious words, read out to us on Christmas Day Morning, bore primary application to him. He was the great king, the good king, the king with perfect heart before God. Nevertheless, what a littleness there was in his greatness; how much dross mingled with this fine gold; how many life-consuming parasites clung about the branches of that stately tree; and how many worms of earth preyed upon its secret roots! He, whose very name Hezekiah, Jehovah is my strength, bore witness to him that God is the Giver and worker of all things,—that man is nothing in himself, and therefore has nothing to do with pride and boasting,—could, nevertheless, in an hour of weakness, proudly display his kingdom's treasures to the king of Babylon, to glorify not God but man; and so brought a curse both on these treasures and on his people. He, who by the simple strength of faithful prayer had borne up against the mighty opposition of Sennacherib, and brought salvation to the city, and ruin to its enemies, could not stand against the threatened coming of Death; but turned his face to the wall, and wept, crying out, "O LORD, I am oppressed." There is clearly, then, no *perfect* example in such a history as this. And there can be no lasting glory, no certain perpetuity, in the Kingdom of the father of Manasseh. You need a higher example, a better Kingdom, than this.

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his strength, that we may learn what made, and could alone keep him strong and great. Let us contemplate him in the hour of his weakness and littleness, that we may learn what made him weak, and what alone could have given him strength again.

I. And, first,—study him in the hour of his greatness, described in this Morning's Lesson. Now, here we must be careful that we understand Hezekiah's real position and circumstances, that we do not underestimate the reality of his trial, or the brightness of his faith. Rabshakeh, you will remember, had taken great pains to impress upon him, and upon the people, why their case seemed hopeless, and his triumph secure. He claims to be no mere adventurer, no self-willed invader, no wolf coming down upon the fold for prey; but the minister of the LORD whom the Jews worshipped, and the executioner of His wrath upon a people whom he was about to cast off and destroy. He boldly says, "The LORD said unto me, Go up against this place to destroy it." He even dares to intimate that he was destined to rule the LORD's people, to give them greater blessings than they had ever known before. And when Hezekiah considered the state of the kingdom, even after his reformation;—when he looked upon Jerusalem, and saw how little it was really reformed;—when he realized the degradation of the people, their sinfulness, their rebellion, their seemingly hopeless disunion;—when, moreover, he recalled to mind the words of the Prophet Isaiah himself, uttered in the ears of his predecessors—was he not, think you, strongly tempted to believe that what Sennacherib said was

true ;—that this mighty host had come up at the command of the LORD, to be the avenging instrument of His wrath upon a people who would not turn to Him ? Might he not even believe that this power was about to take the place of that which would not do the work of the LORD ? But, as a true son of Abraham, and successor of David, he could not believe this. To have done so would have been impiety. The claim of Sennacherib was to him simply blasphemous. It was in the seed of Abraham that all nations were to be blessed. It was by a son of David that the chosen people were to be ruled. This dreaded Assyrian power, this mere accident of material greatness, this strong arm of idolatry, vaunting itself under the protection of Nisroch, openly reproaching the living God, could never be destined to rule the world, to be the guardian of the Temple and Service of the Holy City. It *must* be against God's order. It must be a dark disturbing force in God's world. It must be only suffered to come against the chosen nation for its probation, not sent for its destruction. Yes, it must be so. God's covenant with Abraham, renewed with David, *must* be everlasting. He was still the God of Hezekiah, and of his people. There stood the Temple ;

• there was revealed the witness of His eternal presence with His own. No amount of national disobedience, ingratitude, and iniquity, could drive Him away, or make Him less willing to be there than in the days of Solomon. He who had promised to dwell in some special and mysterious manner between the Cherubims was the unchanging LORD and King of the faithful few. He could do, and was ready to do, all the

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death. Only apart from Him, only when the vision of His eternal love is shrouded by the mists of our own earthly thoughts and feelings, can the coming of death, His Angel, His Minister, be felt as the oppression of a terrible foe. Look we all around this Church! What comfortable witnesses do we everywhere behold that this last enemy may now be overcome, and will one day be destroyed from the creation of our God! Does not that Font—now arrayed in the robe of Christmas joy—remind each one of us that to us has been revealed the LORD and Giver of Life, the Saviour of our bodies and souls? Are we not members of His Body Who is the Resurrection and the Life, in Whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die? Have we not been adopted, through Him, into the immortal family in heaven and earth, which no changes or chances of earth can break in upon? Are we not heirs of a Kingdom that cannot be moved? Does not that Altar bear witness that the Bread of Life is offered to each one of us, and we, by Faith, may eat and live for ever? Does not that Lectern show us the Word of God, the foundation of our hope, which shall not pass away, though the heavens and the earth be no more?

I pray God, Brethren, that such thoughts as these may carry our minds into the New Year so soon to dawn upon us. It is true that, whether we look back upon what has come, or look forward to what may come, there is much to make us say, "I am oppressed." Oh, let us shake off this oppression! Let us bravely defy, and go forth against our enemy, whenever he may come. Let us lift up our hearts to the

regions of light where he cannot find *us*, though he strike down our bodies. Let our prayer be, both at the close of the Old and the beginning of the New Year, such as this: "O Thou that dwellest between the Cherubims, my LORD and my King, my Father and my Redeemer; I am weak and helpless, and fearful in myself; I know not what may come upon me; but I know that all which cometh from Thee is good. To Thee, therefore, I leave all. Nothing Thou sendest upon me will I fear; nothing can oppress me. Only leave me not alone; 'Undertake for me!'"

SERMON VI.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

UNDISTRACTED SERVICE.

1 *Corinthians* vii. 35.

“THAT YE MAY ATTEND UPON THE LORD WITHOUT DISTRACTION.”

I HAVE chosen these words for my text to-day, because they seem to me to embody the whole practical teaching of the Sundays after the Epiphany.

As the light of the Sun is manifested to herbs, and trees, and flowers, that they may be fitted, in their manifold forms and endowments, to “attend upon” their Great Creator, by glorifying the earth, which is His footstool; so CHRIST, the Sun of Righteousness, is manifested unto us, that we may “present our bodies a living sacrifice” unto God; that, as “many members in one body,” we may “attend upon” our common King, with our “gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.” And as, if flowers or trees fail to accomplish the purpose for which they are set in the creation of God, it is not because of any “variableness or shadow of turning” in the Sun of Heaven; but because their life has

been "distracted" from its influences by untoward circumstances of earth; so, if we be found barren or unfruitful in our Father's new creation of Grace;—if we either do not "know what things we ought to do," or lack "grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same,"—it is not because His light has ever failed us; but because of the "distraction" of our lives by earthly cares. It is with us, as with the idolater so wonderfully described in the First Lesson; "a deceived heart" has turned us aside from that Divine light which alone can nourish the life of man.

Without, then, entering into any critical examination of the context, let us take the words of the text as we find them; and let us learn from them,

First, what is the true character and proper work of our redeemed life in CHRIST; and,

Secondly, wherein consists our chief and common danger in the great work to which we are called.

I. S. Paul says, "To this end CHRIST both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be LORD both of the dead and living."^(a) So also, to this end we both died with Him unto sin, and rose again with Him unto righteousness, and have been enlightened by His Spirit, called into His Church, and invested with all the privileges of His kingdom, that we might evermore "attend upon" Him our King. That expression, "attend upon," involves the idea of a seat or throne; and thus it brings to mind some of the sublimest passages of Holy Writ. Michaiiah the Prophet says to the King of Israel, "I saw the LORD sitting

(a) Rom. xiv. 9.

on His throne, and all the host of Heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left.”^(b) Isaiah says, “I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Heaven.”^(c) Ezekiel says, “Above the firmament was the likeness of a throne; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.”^(d) Could we, like S. John, rise up, “in the Spirit,” beyond the veil of material things, a far grander and more comforting vision would be unfolded to our gaze. We should behold not only “the likeness as of the appearance,” but “One like the Son of Man,”^(e) the Lamb upon His throne.^(f) We should “see JESUS standing upon the right hand of God.”^(g) We should hear, coming forth from that throne, the same human Voice which once overpowered Saul of Tarsus, “I am JESUS.” For, evermore, day and night, we are before that Throne; though as yet it is veiled from our bodily sight. The whole Church,—JESUS in His people, and they in Him—is the living Temple filled with divine glory. Our thoughts and affections, therefore, should form one unbroken flow of adoration; our lives should be one continuous act of devotion. Yes; to keep our whole selves before that hidden throne,—to demean ourselves as those who feel that the eye of the King of kings is upon them, and that the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God is being offered in Heaven for their sins,—to draw up and consecrate to His service life with all its circumstances,—this is the calling of every

(b) 1 Kings xxii. 19.

(c) Isaiah vi. 1.

(d) Ezek. i. 26.

(e) Rev. i. 13.

(f) Rev. vii. 17.

(g) Acts vii. 56.

baptized man ; and beyond this no counsel of perfection can be given.

If such be indeed the character of the life to which we are called, see what must be the work of every redeemed man. We are all alike called out and consecrated to "attend upon the Lord." Let us keep clearly before us the image which I said is involved in that expression. A king is upon his throne. Who attend upon him? Not those only who bow down to do him homage. Some, indeed, are called to this employment; others receive and pass on his royal commands; others superintend the execution of these commands; others, again, are appointed to execute them. Some "attend upon" him in preparing war against his enemies; others "attend upon" him in speeding forth as heralds to foreign lands; others, again, are engaged in actual warfare far away. Some "attend upon" him in studying for him the records and laws of state; others equally "attend upon" him in putting in force what the former have studied. Some "attend upon" him in high places of trust; others "attend upon" him as the servants of his great ones. But all, the highest as well as the lowest, do him service; and each one is rewarded as he is faithful to the trust reposed in him. So it is, brethren, in the Church. We all, whatsoever our position, and calling, and gifts, alike "attend upon" the "King immortal, eternal, invisible." *They* "attend upon" Him, who may be said to be nearest His throne,—the dying, the sick, the mourners, the broken-hearted,—who can but pray, and meditate, and watch for His coming. *They* also

“attend upon” Him, who, by wise conversation, and holy example, and earnest work, glorify His Name in the busy world. *They* “attend upon” Him, who can work but with brain and heart in His service;—studying, thinking, writing, advising, and ordering. *They* equally “attend upon” Him, who are called forth, day by day, to active work amongst their fellow men. The rich “attend upon” Him, when they use aright their powers of influence, to protect, to elevate, and to bless those beneath them. The poor no less “attend upon” Him, when they do their lowly work with patience and submission to their Heavenly Father’s will; striving to “honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honour the king.” *They* “attend upon” Him, those world-renouncing, self-devoted women, who delight in ministering to the sick and the dying, not considering their own lives dear unto them, if they may but comfort CHRIST’s poor members. *They* no less “attend upon” Him, who, amidst the pressing cares of a full home, bring up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the LORD,” or who, in comparative solitude, affectionately attend some helpless relative, or soothe and set heavenwards some departing soul. Every one in his own sphere is a worker both for and with CHRIST; every one by his faithful work benefits all; every one is dependent upon others. Every one, therefore, has for his reward the love of the King. Every one reflects the glory of the King, just as the variegated panes in that east window reflect the glory of the sun. Oh that we could all be brought to take this view of the character, and object, and work of Chris-

tian life; that we could think of ourselves as standing ever in the presence of our King, pledged to live for Him, and "attend upon" Him! Oh that we could regard our work in the Church, whatever it be, —whether of priests or laymen; whether of statesmen, or thinking men, or merchant men, or labouring men, or serving men,—as appointed for us by the infinite wisdom and love of our God, as just that which is best for our own eternal welfare, and for the life and honour of the mystical Body whereof we are members; even as the proper action of every nerve and vein is needful for the life and health of the material body wherewith we are compassed! Then, indeed, would this earth soon wear the aspect of Heaven, and become ready for the final revelation of the King in His Glory.

II. We come now to the second thing taught us in the text,—Our chief and common danger in the work of our redeemed life. It is simply *distraction*. Let us, then, consider this evil; first, as it affects *doctrine*; or, to keep to the image we have been using, the Word of our King; secondly, as it affects the *work* of our King; thirdly, as it affects *devotion*, or the adoration of our King.

1. First, then, there is the danger of distraction in respect to *doctrines*. We will again suppose an eastern monarch upon his throne. He plainly makes known his commands to his ministers of state. The army is to move forward at a certain time, in a certain direction, for certain operations. Different men are responsible for different works. But, amongst the officers appointed to carry out the royal injunctions, there are

some who think their judgment wiser than their king's: there are others who have their selfish reasons for wishing that his commands were other than they are. Accordingly, one suggests that the king cannot possibly have intended *this*; another that perhaps he but conditionally enjoined *that*; a third endeavours to prove that certain untoward consequences will be sure to follow plain obedience to their royal master's full directions. Thus, words are criticised, meanings are suggested, plain sense is obscured. There arise disputings, and wranglings, and alterations, until at length it can hardly be remembered what the original instructions of the king were. Distraction of controversy leads to darkening of counsel; and so the work for which they were sent forth is half done, or undone. And they must return to their king, to account for dishonour and defeat.

Is not this, Brethren, a true picture of what is going on at the present time in the Christian Church? Surely the instructions of our Great King in His Word, as witnessed by His Church, are plain enough to all who give themselves wholly to understand them. But we suffer our minds to get distracted by the questions and objections of proud, and foolish, and wicked men. We listen to those who point to the word of our God in Holy Scripture, and ask "How can these things be?" We are reminded of so many baptized men self outcast from their Heavenly Father's presence, and living in an unfilial state, that we hardly dare to claim for our baptized children the full blessings of the Covenant. We are so startled by the objections of profane minds, that we hesitate to reach

out after the great gifts which God offers through the simplest means. We come with slow and faltering steps to seek Him where He has said He will surely be found by His faithful ones, even in "the most comfortable Sacrament of His Body and Blood." How long—oh! how long—shall we thus halt between the opinions of man and the truth of God? Let us dare to profess all that He has taught us; and let us bravely live out all that we profess.

2. There is danger of distraction in our *work*. Who, let me ask, offer greatest dishonour to their King? Whom would He judge to be His worst subjects? Not those, I opine, who disobey His commands altogether; who say, we will not go;—but those who profess to go, and go not; those who go with half hearts, and do his work negligently. And is not this the case, Brethren, with too many of us? We do not give ourselves wholly to the work of our Christian calling. We do not bend upon it all the powers of our mind, nor concentrate upon it all the feelings of our hearts. We do not set about it as if attending upon the LORD. We suffer ourselves to be far too much distracted ever to accomplish great works for God or man. When Nehemiah was tempted down to the plains of Ono by his adversaries, he answered, "I am doing a great work; so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?"^(h) Oh that those whom God has set to be the ministers of His Church would imitate this noble self-devotion! But, while we are

(h) Nehem. vi. 2.

distracted by controversies, by protests and petitions, by exciting meetings, and newspaper correspondence, the work of reclaiming, and teaching, and comforting poor souls remains undone; and the Name of our Redeemer is dishonoured in the world.

And yet, it is not only the Clergy whose work may be thus hindered and brought to nothing by "distrac-tion." We have all a great work to do for the House of our God: we are all tempted to let "the work cease" whilst we go down to some "plain" of world-liness.

There are some of you, Brethren, who have recently come up from quiet country scenes, for a new season in this place of many distractions and many temptations. You know best whither the veiled hand of Divine Providence is leading you: you understand best how you are working out the great purpose for which God preserves your life. It is hardly for us, educated so differently, to judge you. Go, if it must be so, into those scenes,—I will not say of pleasure,—but of excitement and of splendour, where "society," as you call it, expects you sometimes to be found. Perform all the duties which that same "society" exacts of you. Only, I, God's minister, most solemnly implore you, go nowhere, do nothing, which will distract you from the one great end of your redeemed life, which is, to "attend upon" the Lord. Keep Him ever before you. Give your first thoughts, your best affections to Him. Morning by morning, and night by night, examine yourself before Him; and offer your regular sacrifice of prayers and praises. Be ready at any moment to stand before His judgment

seat. Then be not afraid; for His mark shall be upon you, and His light shall follow you.

3. Lastly, with respect to *devotion*, or the adoration of the King. Prayer is eminently attending upon the Lord: therein we enter into the King's audience chamber; we do special homage before His throne. Then, if ever, the whole mind, the whole heart, the whole self must be concentrated upon Him. Now, I believe that one great reason why some have given up the habit of regular prayer is this:—they became conscious of increasing distractions as they knelt before God. There seemed to them something unreal, awfully unreal, in the posture they assumed, and the form of words they used. And they said within themselves, "anything rather than act a part; anything rather than insincerity." So far they were right; for sincerity is the very soul of devotion. But, did they realize their true state, and the causes of it? Did they not forget that the evil was entirely of their own making, and the remedy within their own reach? For the distraction which made their devotion so unreal was but the simple consequence of their distracted life. But I would speak more especially of public worship. I know not what others feel, but to me it is sometimes a very bitter reflection, how distracted I have been in the great and glorious work of worshipping God in His House, with "the whole family in earth and in heaven;" and I know earnest Christian people who confess to have felt so indignant with themselves on the same account, that they were tempted to say, "the Service itself cannot be right: either the forms which we have used were

wrong forms, or there should be no forms at all. Anything rather than this miserable unreality." Alas! Brethren, it is not the forms that need changing, but ourselves. The unreality lies deep in our own hearts. If our lives were not distracted at home, neither would our devotions in the congregation of the LORD's House be. Think, Brethren, in what state of mind many of us are wont to come into this Church! What worldly thoughts, and affections, and cares we bring with us! How little time we allow ourselves to prepare for the LORD's Presence! How seldom we meditate by the way on the teaching of the Christian Seasons! How often we break off our worldly conversations at the very Church doors! What! can we not watch with our LORD a few brief hours on His Holy Day? Can we not forget the world, and give ourselves wholly to the things of a higher life, for the little time we are here? One thing more. Some of you must pardon my saying that you behave very cruelly to your brethren. *They* believe that the beauty of the Church Service consists in its unity and harmony; they therefore would not miss any portion of it. *You* do not understand this; and therefore, coming late to Church, you break in upon the most solemn part of their worship. While they are pouring out the Confession of their sins, or, after the comfortable assurance of Absolution, are saying "Our Father which art in heaven," then comes the rustling of your finery, and the tinkling of your ornaments, and the bold tread of your careless feet, painfully distracting the devotion of all around you. Surely for the sake of others, if not for

yourselves, you might exert yourselves to be in your places before the Service begins.

May God in mercy draw all our hearts from the bondage of the world, and knit them more closely to Himself, and strengthen them to serve Him better and better every day ; so that at the last we may be brought, through the grave, and gate of death, to His glorious Heavenly Temple, where alone we shall all be able to " attend upon " Him without distraction !

SERMON VII.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

(Preached at S. Paul's on the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.)

WHAT WE SHALL BE.

1 John iii. 2, 3.

"BELOVED, NOW ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD, AND IT DOETH NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE SHALL BE: BUT WE KNOW THAT, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.

AND EVERY MAN THAT HATH THIS HOPE IN HIM PURIFIETH HIMSELF EVEN AS HE IS PURE."

THE question continually pressed home to our minds in all the appointed Services for to-day is this:—What shall we be, if the true Sons of God, at the last Epiphany of our LORD, in His eternal and glorious kingdom?

Many a time, it may be, we have gathered a comfortable answer to this question, when we needed it, from the plain statements of our Blessed LORD and His Apostles, in the New Testament. While we bent over the grave of relative or friend, there came to our minds those words of S. Paul: "We look for a Saviour, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall change

our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.”^(a) When we realized the bitterness of bereavement in vacant chair and silent hearth, we remembered that Heavenly Jerusalem from whence “none shall go out;” wherein shall be “no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.”^(b) When our hearts grew sad at spectacles of poverty and need and misery amongst our fellow men, we were reminded of that blessed state, where “they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more.”^(c) When we beheld wrong and oppression and cruelty, we thought of Isaiah’s vision of that “Holy Mountain” whereon they shall not “hurt nor destroy.”^(d) When, contemplating the vast creation of God, we became painfully conscious how little our human intelligence can explain, how little our hearts can embrace, of the beautiful and wonderful things around us, we thought of the time when “the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.”^(e) When, studying our own wonderful life, and the mysterious progress of the Kingdom of Heaven, we were compelled to confess with S. Paul, “Now I see through a glass, darkly: * * * now I know in part,” we could comfort ourselves with his assurance, “*then* face to face: * * * then shall I know even as I am known.”^(f) When we were made to “groan within ourselves,” under the “bondage of corruption” still holding this mortal body, we thought of “the liberty of the glory of the Sons of God:” we remembered the Lord’s

(a) Philp. iii. 2.

(b) Rev. vii. 16.

(c) Rev. vii. 17.

(d) Is. xl. 9.

(e) Is. xxxii. 3.

(f) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

own words, "they shall be like unto the angels."^(g) "The righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."^(h) And so it ever is: the truth of God's Holy Word shines most brightly out when most His people need it. It may be true, as has been somewhere said, that there is "a remarkable reserve in Holy Scripture" on the subject of the future life and dwelling place of the Saints: if so, it is because in this matter men are most liable to be led astray by imagination. There is, however, every information plainly given which we can possibly need for the nourishment of our better hopes, as we pass through the trials and sorrows of this world. There is nothing sublime or beautiful in the universe which has not been made to illustrate the glory and blessedness of that eternal home, whither our Heavenly Father is guiding His children. Nevertheless, most true it is, as S. John teaches us, "It doth not yet appear,"—it hath not yet been declared,—"What we shall be;" for we who are in the body cannot possibly conceive of life out of the body: we, who are compassed about with corruption and death, cannot realize what we shall be "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality." Heaven, *as a state* of infinite purity and blessedness, the perfection of all good, we can in some measure imagine; but Heaven, *as a place*, the dwelling of immortal man, is beyond our imagination. We could easily understand leaving behind in the grave, and losing for ever our present

(g) Matt. xxii. 30.

(h) Matt. xiii. 48.

bodies, and rising up to a life like that of the Cherubim and Seraphim, the personified intelligences and affections around the Throne of God. We could imagine a state wherein "the corruptible body" should never "press down the incorruptible soul" in its high and holy musings; where the heart should desire all good, and perfectly enjoy all it desires. We could anticipate coming to Mount Sion, thronged with "the innumerable company of Angels," and "Spirits of just men made perfect." But, coming thither as embodied spirits to meet embodied spirits; nay, coming thither with these identical bodies,—bodies now exposed to need, and pain, and sin,—bodies which, as a debt to sinful nature, must be dissolved into dust, but which CHRIST has promised to revive, and fashion like unto His own,—this is, indeed, beyond all that we can imagine: no natural experiences, no earthly signs can satisfy us here.

And yet, we have no reason to complain of this scanty information concerning what we hope to be; for, indeed, the knowledge undoubtedly given us is everything we can desire. "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." We know it, because we are like Him now: the sons of God must be like their Father. Having been made "partakers of CHRIST,"⁽ⁱ⁾ and in Him, "partakers of the Holy Ghost,"^(k) we are, as S. Peter teaches, "partakers of the divine nature."^(l) We are predestinated and called "to be conformed to the image of His Son," Who is "the brightness of His Father's glory, and

(i) Heb. iii. 14.

(k) Heb. vi. 4.

(l) 2 Pet. i. 4.

the express image of His Person.”^(m) “We all, * * beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD.”⁽ⁿ⁾ But now, we must all sadly confess, this glass—this mirror, in which we contemplate our Father’s glory in CHRIST—is dimmed by the sinfulness of our nature, and broken by the power of the “god of this world.” Hardly do God’s dearest children attain to the feeblest imitation of what they but darkly discern. Oh, what are the noblest examples of humility, patience, self-denial, and devotion, compared with the boundless love of Him, who sent His only-begotten Son into the world, to die for sinful man? What are the highest and holiest of His saints, when they stand before Him in whose sight the very heavens are not clean? But hereafter, we, who are now “like Him” in the new nature which He has bestowed upon us by His Spirit, and “like Him” in love of truth, righteousness, and wisdom, shall be “like Him” in life, and in the possession of what we now can only long for. We know that we shall be so “like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” The Vision and Presence of God will make us like God. And, doubtless, the process of assimilation will be analogous to what it is on earth. We shall be changed “from glory to glory.” We shall rise from one measure and height of perfection to another. Our minds will grow in knowledge and wisdom: our hearts will abound more and more in love. Yes; the more we see of God, the more we

(m) Heb. i. 3.

(n) 2 Cor. iii. 18.

must needs love Him; and the more we love Him, the more we shall delight to serve Him.

Oh, how it stirs the faithful heart thus to think of that "eternal and glorious kingdom" hereafter to be revealed;—to think of seeing God *as He is*, in His infinite purity, goodness, and love; and *man as he was*, according to the first perfect design of his Maker;—to think of being "like unto the Angels," as wise to know, and ardent to desire, and mighty to perform our Master's work; and yet better than the Angels, as knowing, by our human experience, more of our Father's love than they;—to think of serving God with the "glorious liberty" of His dear children; with every veil which now hangs between our spirit and Him removed, with every taint of evil washed from our redeemed nature, with every consciousness of unworthiness dissolved by the irradiation of His love, with every burden of doubt and fear fallen off, with all our minds occupied upon the Vision of the Truth before us, and all our hearts drawn to it, and all our life filled with it;—to think of being united, both in worship and service, with "Angels and Archangels, and all the company of Heaven," and also those with whom "we took sweet counsel" in the House of God on earth;—to think of living for ever and ever in a world where all the dear bonds of human relationship will be remembered and perfected, while new relationships shall be continually formed with beings higher and more glorious than now can enter into the heart of man to conceive!

I say, it stirs the faithful heart to think of all this. Does it, then, Brethren, stir our hearts? Have we this glorious hope, and is this hope well grounded?

S. John, in the following verse, supplies us with one very easy test: "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." He does not put it, you will observe, by way of exhortation. He does not say, let every man who hopes that at the last he shall be found a son of God, and therefore shall see Him as He is, and be made like Him, purify, or rather endeavour to purify, himself. But he designates the purification to be a necessary fruit and consequence of the hope, "Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself." If a man is not purifying himself,—if he is not being conformed to the image of God revealed in JESUS,—he can have no such hope. For, how can a man hope to gain the place and the glory of a Son of God at the last, if he gives up himself to serve the world, and to do the works of the devil now? How can a man hope to be "like God" hereafter, who will not be like Him, as he is declared in His Son, and described in His Word now? Here, however, let me ask you to observe one very important point; and to some it will serve for comfort and encouragement. S. John says, "Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself." But, strictly speaking, no man can do this. Purification is the work of God alone. Therefore, we may perhaps venture to read our English translation of the Apostle's words in another way. "Every man that hath this hope, in Him purifieth himself;" that is, he purifies himself in God, through His Son, by His Spirit. As we can only become sons of God in JESUS the only-begotten Son; as we can only be made like God by being likened unto the image of His Son;

so we can only purify ourselves, as he is pure, by the work of His Holy Spirit. Thus, as S. Paul bids the Philippians work out their "own salvation with fear and trembling," "because God worketh in them" to will and to do of His good pleasure; so S. John bids every man purify himself, because Jesus the Pure, by his Spirit of purity, lives and works within him.

The question, then, is not so much—are we purifying ourselves? But have we given our lives wholly to God in CHRIST that He may purify us? And are we diligently and faithfully using every means which He has ordained in His Church for our purification? Do we habitually lift up our souls to Him in earnest prayer? Do we regularly come to Him in Holy Communion, that He may "feed us with the spiritual food of His most precious Body and Blood," and that our Heavenly Father may "assure us thereby that we are very members incorporate in the mystical Body of His Son?" Do we strive to live up to the holy profession we have made; struggling against "the sin which doth so easily beset" us, and imitating, as we best can, the life of Jesus in the world?

Oh, never forget, Brethren, that we must be *now*, in nature and in character, what we hope to be hereafter. Life in Heaven will be but the perfection of the life to which we are called in the kingdom of God now. There is no second regeneration to look forward to. CHRIST, when He is revealed at the end of time to "make all things new," will not make us something which now we are not. He will but revive, and renovate, and glorify what we are; even as the sun in

summer will not give life to the trees and flowers; but will draw forth and glorify the life which is in them. We are already partakers of "the glory that shall be revealed;"^(o) for JESUS Himself says, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given unto them;" and S. Paul says, "Whom He justified, them He also glorified."^(p) Where, then—where, in our daily life, are the germs of that Heavenly glory which God has given us, and which He is ever seeking to develope? Where, in you and me, are the works of that Love, which is His distinctive attribute, and which likens man to Him? Where are the Heavenly dispositions, and hopes, and employments, and aims which mark us, in the eyes of all who take knowledge of us, that we are indeed "the seed which the LORD hath blessed," "the Sons of God," "pilgrims and strangers upon earth," looking for and hasting unto their Father's home, content to lose all the world if only they can be brought safely thither?

May the Spirit of our Father descend from Heaven, and fill our hearts and lives with His love, that we may ever keep our heavenward way, and that all that way may be heaven to us!

(o) 1 Pet. v. 1.

(p) Rom. viii. 30.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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